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SUBJECT: UNSC REFORM: GENERAL ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT SCHEDULES
START OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL NEGOTIATIONS FOR NOVEMBER 21,
2008

REF: USUN NEW YORK 840

Classified By: Ambassador Alejandro D. Wolff, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (SBU) In an October 10 letter addressed to all missions, the President of the General Assembly (PGA) Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann announced: (1) a meeting of the Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) on November 11, 2008; and (2) an informal plenary of the General Assembly on November 21, 2008, to commence intergovernmental negotiations. He also announced that the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan Zahir Tanin, one of the Vice Presidents of the 63rd UN General Assembly, would chair these sessions on his behalf. (Note: The General Assembly Plenary discussion of Security Council reform is still scheduled for November 13, 2008. End note.)

12. (SBU) The PGA's announcement accelerates the timetable set forth in the consensus decision (now known as 62/557) agreed to by the 62nd session of the UN General Assembly on September 15, 2008. As detailed in reftel, that decision called on the OEWG to "continue immediately to address...the framework, modalities...in order to prepare and facilitate intergovernmental negotiations." The Chairman of the OEWG "will present the results of these consultations to an informal plenary session of the General Assembly, no later than February 1, 2009." It also decided, "taking into consideration the results achieved so far in the OEWG,...to commence intergovernmental negotiations in (an) informal plenary of the General Assembly during the sixty-third session of the General Assembly, but not later than February 28, 2009."

13. (C) The Italian Perm Rep, a leader of the Uniting for Consensus (UFC) bloc, specifically requested today that the P-5 intervene with the Group of Four (G-4) and the PGA to question the rush to commence intergovernmental negotiations. We are coordinating our reaction with Russia, China, and key UFC members. We plan to meet with the PGA next week and tell him that we consider his acceleration of the negotiating timetable a breach of the spirit of the compromise that facilitated the consensus agreement on September 15, and that it risks setting back the reform process.

14. (C) Comment: We understand that G-4 member South Africa was pressing the PGA to start intergovernmental negotiations before the end of the year so that South Africa could go to the African Union Summit in January and seek a modification of the Ezulwini Consensus. (Note: The Ezulwini Consensus requires African states to seek an expansion of the Security Council that includes African permanent seats with veto

power. End note.) If negotiations are not already underway, they will be told to start the negotiations based on the previous decision and then will have to wait until the July summit for any modifications. If negotiations have started, South Africa will be able to argue that permanent seats with the veto power are a sticking point and request flexibility on the veto issue. End comment.
Khalilzad